



THE QUEEN'S
COMMONWEALTH ESSAY COMPETITION 2019

GOLD AWARD



2019

This is to certify that the Royal Commonwealth Society, on
recommendation of the judges, has awarded this certificate to:

Iffah Shamim



Dr Linda Yueh
Chair

Dr Diana Owen OBE
Chair of Junior Judging Panel

Vicki Wienand
Chair of Senior Judging Panel



THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY

Birds fly for a reason

Home is where the heart is.

We sit in places we've known, with people we know, but there's a world out there, waiting like an airplane, yearning to departure.

Curiosity wanders in our spines like electric waves in wires – lost.

“Class, what is the one place each of you feel connected to?” the teacher quizzes with desire blazing in her like fire burning down houses. Her eyes are a raging storm while her spirit tries to rise, like the golden orb.

My forest green eyes meander in the direction of the glinting sunlight, outside the four walls I'm confined in.

The sky is a smouldering flame. Inhibited behind the mountains is the golden orb, rising gradually to the midst of the igniting sky, like us, falling before rising, failing before succeeding. It hides behind the clouds, playing hide-and-seek with the serene world below it. The clouds are cotton candy in wisps, covering the empty, endless, scorching void.

Fresh, aromatic air fills the atmosphere like silent yet deadly whispers. No factories in sight, a tranquil environment; somewhere I'd want to live. The birds chirp their boundless tunes melodiously with harmony shining through their diverting voices, longing to be heard, like us.

A gentle breeze hustles by like an acquaintance waving 'hello'. A green leaf soars, landing on my small button nose. The current of the air blows it away and it hovers again, higher than before.

“I wonder where it leads to,” I say, inquisitively with a faint smile running across my face, following it as it flies. The second thing I followed.

“Probably to Anywhere.” a voice replies, dully, lurking behind the bushes, hustling them. It sounds like the crumpling of lifeless sheets of paper.

Cautious and hesitant, a tall yet healthy figure emerges. Her hair is as black as night. The Sun had mercy upon her, but betrayed her, it's apparent from her tan complexion.

“Anywhere? Where or what's that? Where am I? Who are you?” Questions ignite my mind like fire ignites cooking. I scan the place with a faded smile. “Wait, hold your horses. I'm not in San-Francisco?”

“No.”

Silence.

“Then, where am I?”

Silence.

“Where am I?” I ask, hissing, longing to know. The urgency in my voice makes her oblige.

“Eyes that meander and minds that amble are never lost.” she explains confidently, but shreds of anxiety still occupy within her, glued on her like virtues on nobles.

The certainty in her voice is familiar.

Her wise demeanor is familiar.

“Then I, along with my eyes and mind, will meander.” I say with a vivid smile before running away.

Rays of sunshine flicker around me, dancing as I approach the soothing lake. The lake is a mirror, reflecting off the beaming, grinning sky. Trees stand, stuck firmly in the luscious green ground; the same colour as my eyes.

Light dappled across the water eddying beside me. It envelopes me, sticking to me as closely as my own skin. It moves sluggishly, ebbs coming and leaving. The gentle breeze howls. Engines roar. The water raging as it engulfs a ship.

Nothing is as good as it seems, I think, water dripping off my clothing, embedded on my face, dropping from my forest green eyes like tears – as clear as crystals.

Dots of glitter are speckled across the sky. The moon hangs like a silver banana. Night is a black curtain draped endlessly across the sky.

In the midst of the moonlight, a muscular figure with grizzled hair stands. He embraces me, looking at me like we are related.

“Darling! Where have you been?” he questions, his surviving pale hand swaying through my hair. They were like butter, soft and a pastel yellow. “I’ve missed you.”

Who am I?

Who is he?

How does he know me?

Where am I?

I don’t know anymore.

Questions fill my mind, striking it like bolts of lightning flashing through the dark void of night. I feel an emotion I cannot put my exact finger on. Like I belong right here, where ever I am, within the embrace of this man, whoever he is.

“Who are you?” I interrogate with a single goal: to know.

“Your father.”

Father. It keeps on striking my mind, quick, as a darted beam of light.

Rubbing my eyes, I’m gone. He’s gone.

Hands rise in the air.

“Home.” they reply.

Where do I feel connected to?

The answer lies within the nooks of my mind, within the power of imagination.